

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-07

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R 191430Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8655

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1553

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (STEVENSON, ADLAI), PFOR, LE, PLO

SUBJECT: 'ARAFAT MAKES PROPOSAL TO CODEL STEVENSON IN BEIRUT

1. SENATOR STEVENSON AND HIS ASSITANT, WILLIAM BUELL, TRAVELLED FROM DAMASCUS TO BEIRUT FEB 17 WHERE THEY HAD TWO-HOUR MEETING WITH PLO EXCOMM CHAIRMAN YASSIR 'ARAFAT. MMETING, WHICH WAS ARRANGED BY CLOVIS MAKSOUD, WAS ALSO ATTENDED BY FAROUK QADDOUMI AND, PROBABLY, SHAFIQ AL HOUT, DIRECTOR OF BEIRUT PLO OFFICE. FOLLOWING LUNCHEON ATTENDED BY 'ARAFAT, SAEB SALAM, RAYMOND EDDE AND GHASSAN TUEINI, CHARGE, POLITICAL OFFICER AND ACTING PAO WERE INVITED BY MAKSOUD TO MEET CODEL BRIEFLY AT HOME OF WALID NAJA, SECRETARY OF BEIRUT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND MAKSOUD'S BROTHER-IN-LAW BY MARRIAGE. CODEL DEPARTED BEIRUT SAME EVENING FOR BAGHDAD.

2. DURING SHORT CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFFS, SENATOR STEVENSON RELATED PORTION OF CONVERSATION WITH 'ARAFAT THAT DEALT WITH 'ARAFAT'S CONCEPTION OF SCENARIO FOR GETTING PLO
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DELEGATION TO GENEVA OR ALTERNATIVE CONFERENCE DEALING WITH

GENERAL MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT. QADDOUMI TOLD CODEL THAT THIS WAS IDEA WHICH HAD BEEN TRIED OUT IN THE PAST ON PRES SADAT BUT LATTER HAD NOT RPT NOT BOUGHT IT. ACCORDING TO PROPOSED SEQUENCE, ISRAELIS WOULD UNILATERALLY WITHDRAW UNSPECIFIED DISTANCE FROM PRESENT FORONTIERS ON WEST BANK AND IN GAZA. CORRIDOR ALONG FORONTIERS WOULD BE TURNED OVER TO UN RPT UN ADMINISTRATION. UN AND ISRAELIS WOULD REMAIN TOGETHER IN REMAINDER OF WEST BANK AND GAZA. ONCE THIS STEP WAS COMPLETED, PLO WOULD BE WILLING TO TAKE SEAT AT PEACE CONFERENCE EITHER IN GENEVA OR ELSEWHERE. 'ARAFAT WAS VAGUE AS T RECOGNITION OF FACT OF ISRAEL. WITH REGARD TO RECOGNITION, CODEL WAS TREATED TO FAMILIAR ARGUMENT THAT IT IS UP TO ISRAEL, AS STATE OCCUPYING "PALESTINIAN TERRITORY," TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE, NOT STATELESS PALESTINIANS. SENATOR OBSERVED TO 'ARAFAT THAT HE WAS PROPOSING "STEP-BY-STEP" PROCEDURE. THIS COMMENT DID NOT ELICIT CLEAR RESPONSE. NEVERTHELESS, CODEL HAD DEFINITE IMPRESSION THAT 'ARAFAT WISHED HIS IDEA TO REACH USG.

3. 'ARAFAT REPORTEDLY SAID THAT, FOLLOWING PLO SUCCESSES AT UNITED NATIONS, UN SYG WALDHEIM WOULD "HAVE TO DEAL WITH ME". HE ALSO MADE PREDICTABLE PITCH FOR USG RECOGNITION OF THE PLO AS SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. DISCUSSING RECENT EVENTS IN LEBANON, 'ARAFAT REVERTED TO CHARGE (MOST PROMINENTLY DISSEMINATED BY ABU IYAD) THAT USG WAS BEHIND TROUBLES AND HAD TURNED PHALANGE AND OTHER "ISOLATIONIST" ELEMENTS ON PALESTINIANS. WHEN SENATOR COMMENTED THAT 'ARAFAT SHOULD HAVE SOME EVIDENCE BEFORE MAKING SUCH ALLEGATIONS, 'ARAFAT REPONDED THAT HE HAD "DOCUMENTARY PROOF" BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, HAD FORGOTTEN TO BRING IT TO THE MEETING.

4. COMMENT: EMBOFFS UNFORTUNATELY DID NOT HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THESE AND OTHER ASPECTS OF CONVERSATION AT LENGTH. NEVERTHELESS, WE FIND IT INTERESTING THAT 'ARAFAT UNVEILED HIS SCHEME, DESPITE ITS PATENT UNACCEPTABILITY TO ISRAELIS. CODEL FOUND 'ARAFAT CONFIDENT, EVEN CODKY. HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES ARE OBVIOUSLY GIVING SOME THOUGHT TO MEANS BY WHICH THEY MIGHT BUY THEIR WAY INTO SETTLEMENT

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PROCESS; HE IS PROBABLY INCREASINGLY CONCERNED WITH CURRENT PLO FEAR THAT JORDAN WILL SOMEHOW STEAL A MARCH ON THE PLO IN NEGOTIATING THE RETURN OF THE WEST BANK. SENATOR SAID 'ARAFAT EXPRESSED FIRM CONVICTION THAT PRES ASAD WOULD NOT RPT NOT GO TO GENEVA WITHOUT HIM BUT WOULD GO IF 'ARAFAT DID.
LAMBRAKIS

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